Matthew Kelly

Expertise Statement

Regardless of my status as a college student and my desire to pursue a career in the teaching profession, I’ve always described myself as a blue-collar worker at heart. There is simply something about using a time-clock and working for an hourly (usually minimum) wage that I enjoy. I work two jobs—both very different in nature—and knowing the ins and outs of both is something that I take pride in, however trivial those ins and outs may be. I work as a grocery clerk for Stop and Shop, and in the Ram’s Den kitchen on campus, working on the line as a chef making Chinese food. Between both jobs, whether I’m making endless orders of General Tso’s chicken with ease, or speedily stocking the shelves of Stop and Shop with the same sauce I used in the kitchen earlier that same day, I did not start off either job as skilled as I am now.

Firstly, I actually started at Stop and Shop as a cashier, hired by the company right when I turned 16. I worked there throughout high school, balancing my time among work, sports, and school. It was while I was a cashier that I strengthened my work ethic and became a trusted employee. Recently, at the start of this past summer, the managers decided to move me to the grocery department as that department needed more manpower. The head honchos deemed I was responsible and experienced enough to perform well working under a more stressful and complicated environment. Throughout the summer, I learned a lot from the full-time grocery employee, and tried my hardest to pay attention to all the details about the department—in hopes that I would be able to become an independent worker and not need my “hand held” constantly throughout the day. Now, I am capable to run the department by myself for a day if needed.

In addition to my job at Stop and Shop, I began working at the Ram’s Den as just a regular worker, working in the deli and prepping foods in the morning. I started during the beginning of the first semester of freshman year. Throughout the year, I tried to learn as much as I could, so I could be my own boss at work and get done what I needed to do. It was during the second semester that I needed to fill in on the line making the Chinese food for the dinner rushes, since all of the state employees had called out due to a snowstorm. Along with one other manager, I worked a 10-hour workday (classes were cancelled because of the snow) and cooked the Chinese food for the day during all of the rushes. My emergency fill-in reached the ears of the Ram’s Den head chef, and she was impressed that I had quickly learned how to operate and run the station. She then requested that for the next year, I work on the line with her and the other student-cooks as my regular job. At the start of this year, I have worked a handful of shifts on the line and enjoy what I do in cooking.

By learning through paying attention, I was able to “rise” to higher and more prestigious positions at both of my jobs. Working my jobs is something that I not only do well, but also enjoy doing. Furthermore, the best part is getting paid to do a job that I enjoy and can complete with ease. It is not to say that the jobs are easy, but because of my willingness to learn and succeed, I have excelled in my role as a grocery clerk and a line cook.